

Approved March 29, 2022

Select Board  
Meeting Minutes  
March 22, 2022 at 5:30 p.m.  
59 Main Street, Hatfield, MA  
Virtual GoToMeeting

Present: Select Board Chair Diana Szynal and Members Edmund Jaworski and Brian Moriarty. Also present were Marlene Michonski, Town Administrator; Julie Pokela; Darryl Williams, Chair, Sean Barry, Kim Baker, Diane Bzozrowski, John Wilkes, Jr., Finance Committee; Robert Flaherty, Chief, Fire Department; Robert Wagner; David Keir, Capital Improvement Planning Committee; Stephanie Slys, Chair and Members Paul Dostal and Bob Hennessy of the Planning Board; Phil Genovese, Director and Garrett Barry, Superintendent of Department of Public Works; Eric Meals and Derrick, Waste Water; Barry Labbe; Eileen Dostal; John Wilkes, Community Preservation; Doc Pruyne, The Reminder

**CALL TO ORDER** Chair Szynal called the meeting to order at 5:35p.m.

**PUBLIC FORUM**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** Selectman Moriarty made a motion to accept the meeting minutes of March 15, 2022, Selectman Jaworski seconded, no discussion, all in favor, aye, minutes approved.

**POSTED BUSINESS**

Community Preservation Committee: Discussion of proposed pedestrian bridge project: Robert Wagner, Chair, Community Preservation and John Wilkes, Treasurer presented before the Board for guidance on this project. Mr. Wagner stated the status of the dam is in flux right now. The State has asked the owners to fix it or take it down. The owners have not said what they will be doing. If the dam would be improved, great; it's very historic. If the dam were to be removed, what's the impact on the supports for the original bridge, the water and the silt? We could find ourselves in a bigger project. If the waterfall is gone, does that lose the public's support to rebuild the bridge? The view would not be that nice looking if the dam were gone. Mr. Wagner said the consensus might be that since we had money since 2015, the bridge has been there for a long, perhaps it makes sense to table it for a year. The State wants an answer from the owners this year. After the owners give their answer, the Committee will have a better idea of where to go with this project. We want the Select Board's guidance. The Board's consensus is that it is wise to put this project on hold for a year until the owners give their answer on what route they are taking with the waterfall. Selectman Moriarty reiterated the dam is

privately owned, not Town property. Mr. Wagner said if the owners apply for a grant to complete the work on the waterfall, the Committee will gladly help.

Fire Chief Flaherty: Discussion of department operations/new hires and review of old ambulance billing accounts: Chief Flaherty informed the Board that he has submitted a letter for an ambulance abatement. The amount of uncollectible accounts is \$5,066.89. Selectman Moriarty made a motion to abate the seven incidents for \$5,066.89 as presented by the Fire Chief, Selectman Jaworski seconded, no discussion, all in favor, aye, motion approved. The Chief spoke about the new hires for the Fire Department, ambulance and EMTS. Selectman Moriarty asked the Fire Chief to reiterate how this came about. Chief Flaherty reminded everyone that he met with the Select Board and Finance Committee in December because the amount of calls to both fire and ambulance departments had increase substantially. The Finance Committee found the funds for the Fire Chief to hire firefighters, EMT and ambulance personnel to cover Friday nights and 16 hour shifts on Saturday and Sunday. These new hires are funded until June 30, 2022. Chief Flaherty reminded everyone that there may be times when mutual aid is in Town because Hatfield is already on a call. The Fire Chief hopes to continue this after July 1. Chief Flaherty said there was an opening for a lieutenant since last January and he posted for the position. The only applicant was Kerry Flaherty so the Fire Chief recused himself. Ms. Flaherty came back for drills and he gave it 6 months. At that point, the job was reposted and the only applicant was Kerry Flaherty. Chief Flaherty turned the matter over to Chief Allen Belden and Chief Belden hired Ms. Flaherty. Selectman Moriarty stated your character, Kerry's character, the character of the department there is delineation. Chief Flaherty agreed and informed the Board that he went to the Ethics Board.

Resignations/Appointments: Resignation of Debra Nimetz from Local Cultural Council: Chair Szynal made a motion to accept the resignation of Debra Nimetz from the Hatfield Cultural Council, Selectman Moriarty seconded, no discussion, all in favor, aye, motion approved.

Melanson Professional Municipal Accounting Outsourced Services Agreement: Ms. Michonski presented the Select Board with the FY23 Melanson Professional Municipal Accounting Outsourced Services Agreement. Selectman Moriarty made a motion to approve the term of agreement commencing 7/1/2022 and ending on 6/30/2023 for Melanson accounting services, Selectman Jaworski seconded, no discussion, all in favor, aye, motion approved.

## **CONTINUED OLD BUSINESS**

Activity/Event Application form Smith Academy Park: Tabled

Julie Pokela Proposal for use of Basketball Court, School Street: Julie Pokela presented before the Board. Chair Szynal and Selectman Moriarty received an email from someone opposing this. Selectman Moriarty said he thought the concern is what if people are waiting to play either basketball or pickleball and what the process would be. The Select Board agreed that pickleball can be played on the basketball court. Selectman Jaworski said he was more concerned about the kids being able to play basketball at the basketball court. He mentioned that there isn't much for kids to do in this town. The discussion came up about playing pickleball inside the school gym. David Keir stated that the problem

has always been handing out keys. Keys go out and the keys keep getting handed off and never come back. Selectman Moriarty made a motion to approve the pickleball court set up at the Town basketball court; Ms. Pokela said that basketball should have priority; Selectman Jaworski seconded on the condition that we try this out for a few months and see where it goes, no discussion, all in favor, aye, motion approved.

FY2023 Budget Reviews/Capital Plan Projects/Annual Town Meeting Business with Finance Committee:

Planning Board: Stephanie Slys, Paul Dostal, Robert Wagner presented the Planning Board budget. Ms. Slys pointed out that this is a third year the Board is asking for a part-time planner. Deerfield Planning Board emailed Ms. Slys asking if she was interested in a shared part-time planner. Having a part time planner will help facilitate economic development and would also reduce legal fees. It relieves the burden from other town staff, grant writing, and helps with conservation, recreation and zoning toward the master plans. It would be helpful to have a planner who is focused on Hatfield. Bob Wagner, when the board thinks about what has happened in the last 6-8 months, new sewer line, Northampton is filling up fast; Hadley is protecting farm land or developing more on Route 9 and there will be more pressure on Hatfield. Doing a new master plan is important but to respond to these things coming forward, storm water management plans, engineering reviews and we don't have that expertise. Being ahead of the game, would be very cost effective.

DPW: Phil Genovese, Director, DPW presented his budgets along with Eric Meals and Derrick. Cemetery-level funded. Vehicle lease - Next year one lease is up and since there were requests from fire, Council on Aging and police for new vehicles, Mr. Genovese suggested paying off lease that's up for 2023 (\$31,000.00) and then roll all leased vehicles into one year to save money. Tree warden – level funded. Transfer station – level funded. Town wide fuel – level funded but since fuel is going up everyday, it's a guess as to what the amount should be. Public Works – level funded. Motor pool – little increase for \$500.00 for parts. Street lights – level funded. Snow and ice – Mr. Genovese is still processing this, it was agreed to add another \$100.00. Facilities maintenance – this account is in deficit. Highway – increase; we need to hire a person. Mr. Williams asked what would happen if we can't find the money what would happen with DEP? Mr. Genovese, probably nothing but Mr. Meals said they may make you hire someone. Mr. Williams asked if we are short on personnel on the highway, Mr. Barry, it's the same. Mr. Genovese, the highway department needs another employee, there are 4 total employees at highway. Line painting has increased. Chapter 90 only pays for painting of new projects, not painting old roads. Chestnut Street will be repaved, Elm Street, and the dirt section of Straits Road. Chair Szynal asked Mr. Genovese you added \$10,000.00 for administrative person? Mr. Genovese answered we need an administrative person. Water – Mr. Meals said the water superintendent never submitted a line-item budget in previous years. Mr. Williams asked if the rates increase 5% every year and Mr. Meals replied 5% should be the increase amount moving forward. Sewer – a small increase as heating oil was not included last year.

Capital Projects: Listed for projects are \$80,000.00 for a compactor and the lease program. Mr. Genovese was hoping to get other projects done this coming year using ARPA funds and questioned the

Select Board and Finance Committee if other projects will be done using ARPA funds? Selectman Moriarty responded we are also looking to not spend all the ARPA funds in the first year.

Town Administrator: Animal Inspector: level funded

Animal Control Officer: increase for uniforms.

Animal inspector – level funded

Audit – slight increase

Property insurance: – 2 ½% increase

Town report: – level funded

Legal fees: - Increase of \$2,000.00

Select Board: – level funded

Technology: – There was an increased for Archive Social.

Town Administrator and Staff: - Contractual increase for town administrator

Winter Celebration: - level funded

Town Hall Operations: - level funded

## **UNANTICIPATED NEW BUSINESS**

## **ADJOURN**

Selectman Moriarty made a motion to go into executive session pursuant to MGL Ch.30A, §21a, 2 to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel and not return to open session, Selectman Jaworski seconded, Szydal – aye; Moriarty – aye; Jaworski – aye at 9:01p.m., meeting adjourned.

Respectfully,

Karen Brodeur  
Executive Assistant